



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Northern Legislators Commend Healthy Forest Initiative**

**Madison** – Representative Mary Czaja (R-Irma) attended the Marshfield Clinic North Central Region Opioid Treatment Consortium in Minocqua where it was announced that the Wisconsin Department of Health Services will provide \$700,000 a year to the Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc. This money will be used to fund a comprehensive program to provide services to individuals addicted to opioid drugs.

Currently, the U.S. makes up 4.6 percent of the world's population but consumes 80 percent of the global supply of opioids. This includes 99 percent of hydrocodone produced, with Vicodin being the most prescribed medication in the U.S. According to the Wisconsin Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, some of the highest numbers of controlled substance prescriptions are in this local region. While people ages 25-34 remain the largest group of opioid abusers, people ages 18-24 are in the fastest growing group of opioid users. Wisconsin sample data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows 4.3 percent of Wisconsin adults report using heroin or another opioid for non-medical purposes in the past year. This represents 163,300 adults. Among Wisconsin residents ages 18-25, the rate of past year use of opioids is 11 percent, or 68,600 people.

**“Based on these numbers it is easy to see that the misuse of opioids is growing at an alarming rate and that serious measures need to be taken to help our Wisconsin residents who are battling opioid addictions,”** said Rep. Czaja.

The event heard from several speakers including Greg Nycz, Executive Director of the Family Health Center of Marshfield, Brooks BigJohn, a member of the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Council, Secretary Kitty Rhoades, of the Department of Health Services, and keynote speaker Representative John Nygren, of the 89th Assembly District.

The consortium is a partnership of 17 organizations from Iron, Price, Oneida, Vilas and Forest Counties and the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Forest County Potawatomi and Sokaogon Chippewa Community. Consortium members will focus on detoxification and treatment, improving quality of life for individuals addicted to opioids with a focus on women of child-bearing age.

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